

The Influence of Total Quality Management on Organizational Performance through Organizational Culture as an Intervening Variable

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Abstract

Total Quality Management (TQM) is widely recognized as an effective approach to enhancing competitiveness and supporting the sustainable development of the agricultural industry. This study aims to analyze the effect of TQM on organizational performance, with organizational culture acting as an intervening variable. The research was conducted in a consolidated agro-industrial State-Owned Enterprise located in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Data were collected from both secondary sources, including company documents and relevant literature, and primary sources obtained through questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale. A total of 69 respondents participated in the study. The data were tested for validity, reliability, and correlation to examine the relationships among TQM, organizational culture, and organizational performance. Descriptive analysis and path analysis were employed using Smart PLS 4.0. The findings indicate that TQM has a positive and significant impact on organizational performance, both directly and indirectly through organizational culture. The effective implementation of TQM practices such as customer focus, top management commitment, process management, benchmarking, and employee involvement contributes to improved operational efficiency and product quality, while simultaneously fostering a quality-oriented organizational culture. The study highlights the theoretical importance of integrating TQM with organizational culture to achieve optimal performance outcomes. Practically, the results provide valuable insights for organizations in formulating strategies to enhance performance through the systematic implementation of TQM supported by a strong and conducive organizational culture.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Organizational Culture, Organizational Performance

Introduction

In the current era, companies must develop competitive advantages to compete in the global market (Farida & Setiawan, 2022; Maftai & Butnaru, 2023) and adapt more effectively in response to market changes (Ihnatenko et al., 2023). An essential aspect of managing a company's competitiveness is the ability to implement more flexible strategic management to adjust to market dynamics, capitalize on new opportunities, and address emerging challenges (Olshanska & Puzyrova, 2024).

Total Quality Management (TQM) is an effective solution in facing economic pressures and enhancing competitiveness in the industrial world (Turang, 2019). TQM is a business approach that maximizes operational efficiency by continuously improving products, services, people,

processes, and the environment (Lestari & Sutrisna, 2021; Nasution, 2005; Regar & Rachmarwi, 2022). TQM has been proven to yield competitive advantages that contribute to improved organizational performance (Purnawidya & Raharjo, 2023; Husain, 2022; Mehregan et al., 2023).

The implementation of TQM requires a strong organizational culture (Nurmiati et al., 2022). Cultural transformation is the key to successful TQM implementation and enhancing company competence (Ngadiman, 2014). Organizational culture plays a crucial role in guiding and managing human resources (Ramadhani, 2011; Suwarno et al., 2020) thus increasing employee commitment and retention (Nurmiati et al., 2022), which is having an impact on an organization's long-term growth (Alghamdi, 2018).

One of the State-Owned Enterprises operating in the agricultural sector, which develops rice seed and rice products, acquired the ISO 9001:2015 Certification for the Quality Management System for Seed Production. This company faced significant challenges that almost led to its closure. In 2021, the company underwent a merger with the aim of forming a superior and sustainable entity. However, till now, the company still uses different operational standard, resulting in salary disparities among employees with the same positions. (Costa, 2023) these disparities can lead to conflicts, employee dissatisfaction, and impact performance.

Following the merger, the company has not yet conducted employee performance evaluations. However, employee evaluation is crucial for TQM implementation and organizational improvement (Lastiawan, 2020; Ullé & Kumar, 2015). Multiple research studies have been carried out to investigate the correlation between TQM and organizational performance. Several of these studies have demonstrated substantial effects (Munizu, 2013; Alghamdi, 2018; Marini et al., 2021; Ngambi & Nkemkiefu, 2015; Ulfina, 2019). The concept of TQM has proven effective in improving overall organizational performance (Labdhagati & Mahfudz, 2017; Latifah et al., 2021; Mariana & Rachmarwi, 2022).

Furthermore, the successful adoption of TQM relies on the presence of a supportive organizational culture (Abdul et al., 2019). The study conducted by (Amarti, 2016) demonstrates that TQM has a favorable and substantial impact on organizational performance through the use of cultural practices. However, study by (Kaid & Mahmood, 2012) suggests that organizational culture cannot moderate TQM and organizational performance due to a lack of alignment between the cultural practices implemented and the TQM initiatives.

This study emphasizes the intricate nature of the connection between TQM, organizational culture, and organizational performance. It is crucial for organizations to ensure that the TQM practices implemented are consistent with the existing culture, thereby creating synergy and a positive impact on performance. By analyzing the problems and prior research findings pertaining to TQM application, this research aims to address the lack of understanding on the importance of TQM implementation in merging companies.

However, no comprehensive and in-depth study has been conducted on merged companies with different socio-cultural backgrounds and corporate structures. By gaining a deeper comprehension of the connections among these factors, businesses can implement the necessary changes to enhance performance, such as integrating operational standards and creating an inclusive culture.

Literature Reviews and Hypothesis Development

TQM in Organizational Performance

TQM directly improves organizational performance by increasing operational efficiency and raising the quality of products or services generated (Olaleye et al., 2021). Effective TQM practices can enhance organizational performance, while poor implementation can hinder goal achievement and negatively affect performance (Dhafer et al., 2015; Texeira-Quiros et al., 2022). TQM has been applied across various sectors. In education, TQM positively influences organizational performance (Texeira-Quiros et al., 2022). In the agricultural sector, TQM impacts organizational performance with indicators such as customer focus, education and training, and individualism (Alhamd et al., 2021).

Increasing market share, earnings, product sales, and decreasing waste and rework are all possible outcomes of implementing TQM (Bazrkar et al., 2022). Several studies (Alghamdi, 2018; Marini et al., 2021; Ngambi & Nkemkiafu, 2015; Ulfina, 2019) affirm that the application of TQM has a substantial impact on organizational performance. Given the aforementioned discoveries, the researcher postulates: H_1 : TQM has a positive and significant effect on OP.

TQM and Organizational Culture

Effective TQM implementation requires the support of a conducive organizational culture (Abdul et al., 2019). Additionally, all employees must acquire new skills to support a culture of change and the quality revolution (Maswadeh & Al Zumot, 2021). Organizational culture encompasses values, norms, and traditions shared within the organization, which can influence how individuals respond to and interact with TQM initiatives (Ababneh, 2020). Several studies state that TQM affects organizational culture (Dimitrantzou et al., 2022; Khalil & Muneenam, 2021; Saleh et al., 2024). However, cultural change can be challenging, and many organizations struggle to overcome resistance from middle management and lack of resources (Coelho et al., 2022). This indicates that TQM implementation can foster an organizational culture that creates a positive, productive, and quality-focused work environment. Based on the above findings, the researcher hypothesizes: H_2 : *TQM has a positive and significant effect on OC.*

TQM in Organizational Performance through Organizational Culture

Several studies indicate that TQM influences performance with the intervention of organizational culture (Amarti, 2016; Alghamdi, 2018; Fok et al., 2023; Al-Shami & Al-Sufif, 2024). Organizational culture has a major moderating effect on the financial success of TQM aspects, especially staff involvement, customer focus, and top management support (Maswadeh & Al Zumot, 2021).

However, study by (Kaid Al-Swidi & Mahmood, 2012) suggests that organizational culture cannot moderate TQM and organizational performance, citing a lack of alignment between implemented cultural practices and TQM initiatives. This demonstrates how intricately TQM, organizational culture, and organizational performance are related. Organizations need to ensure that TQM practices are consistent with the existing organizational culture to achieve synergy and positive effects on performance. Based on the above findings, the researcher hypothesizes: H_3 : *TQM has a positive and significant effect on OP through OC.* The proposed study model is depicted as follows (Fig. 1) (Fig. 2), drawing on the literature reviewed above and the derived hypotheses.

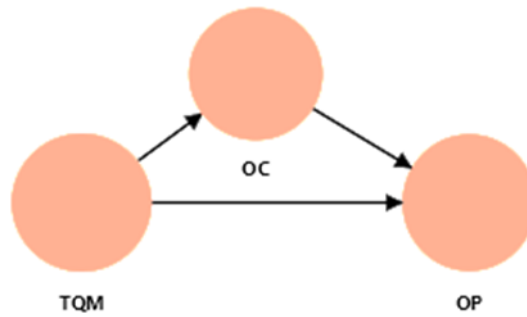


Figure 1. The Study Framework

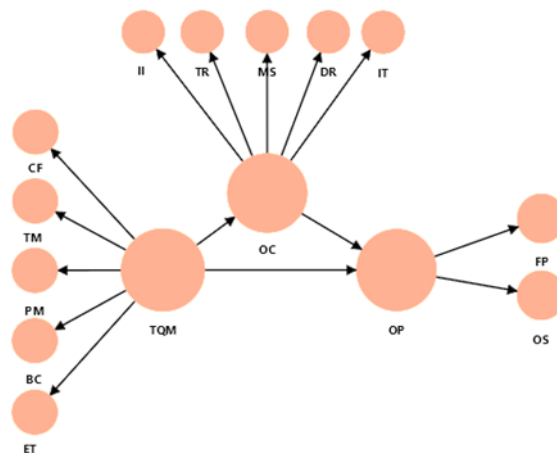


Figure 2. The Study Model

Methods

In this study, the steps taken during the study process were outlined by a method called "study design." The four phases of the study process are shown in Fig. 2. The process is divided into four stages: (1) developing the path model, selecting the study site, and gathering primary data; (2) analyzing the outer model; (3) analyzing the inner model; and (4) testing, interpreting, and concluding/ recommending the hypothesis model. A description of the activities we undertook in each stage is outline below.

Path Model Development, Research Site, Primary Data Collection, and Data Analysis

The first, within this research investigation, we created a model hypothesized to affect the success of organizational performance. From the literature review, we identified the variables of TQM (Variable X) with dimensions such as customer focus, top management, process management, benchmarking, employee engagement and empowerment, as well as the intervening variable of organizational culture (Variable Z) with dimensions such as individual initiative, tolerance for risky actions, management support, direction, and integration. These variables were then connected by creating a path diagram (Fig. 1). In Fig. 2, we assume that variable X directly influences variable Y, and variable Z acts as a mediating variable that affects variable Y. Each variable is measured using specific indicators, forming the model presented in Fig. 3. To facilitate reader understanding, we also present the variables, indicators, and their measurements in Table 1.

After developing the path model, primary data collection and surveys began in December 2023, using a questionnaire. Data collection was conducted at a merged agro-industrial State-Owned Enterprise in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This company consists of a seed production unit, a marketing unit, and a rice production unit. The choice of this company was made by taking into account its application of TQM methods and the circumstances of the recently combined company. The survey involved 69 employees at the company, using a census technique. After primary data collection, data tabulation, verification, and variable verification were conducted to ensure the validity of all data and study model variables. Partial Least Square (PLS) 4.0 software was implemented in the data analysis method. The analysis was performed in two stages: an outer model analysis to evaluate the data's validity and reliability and an inner model analysis to assess the study model's strength. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the Bootstrapping method to minimize issues related to data non-normality (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Analyzing the Outer Model

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is employed as a measure to assess convergent validity, should be greater than 0.50. This suggests that the construct accounts for over 50% of the measurement items' variance. (Ababneh, 2020; Eniola et al., 2019). Additionally, for discriminant validity to be present, the square root of the AVE for a specific construct must exceed its correlation with other constructs. (Al-Dhaafri & Alosani, 2020). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliabilities (CR) are employed as metrics to assess the degree of reliability; both indices should be greater than 0.70. (Bhaskar, 2020; Sirisan & Pianthong, 2019).

Analyzing the Inner Model

Inner model analysis ensures that the model used in this study is valid and accurate. According to Ghozali & Latan (2015), An R-Squares value of 0.67 indicates a robust model, while a value of 0.33 indicates a moderate model, and a value of 0.19 indicates a weak model (Chin, 1988).

Interpreting, and Concluding/ Recommending

Interpretation, conclusion, and recommendations comprised the final stage of the study design. This phase began after the path conditions were met. If any of the requirements were not satisfied, the model needed to be updated and run again. Direct and indirect effect tests were the first steps in the path effect analysis phase. The direct and indirect effects were determined through the CR number generated by PLS software, which should exceed 1.96, or have a p-value below 0.05.

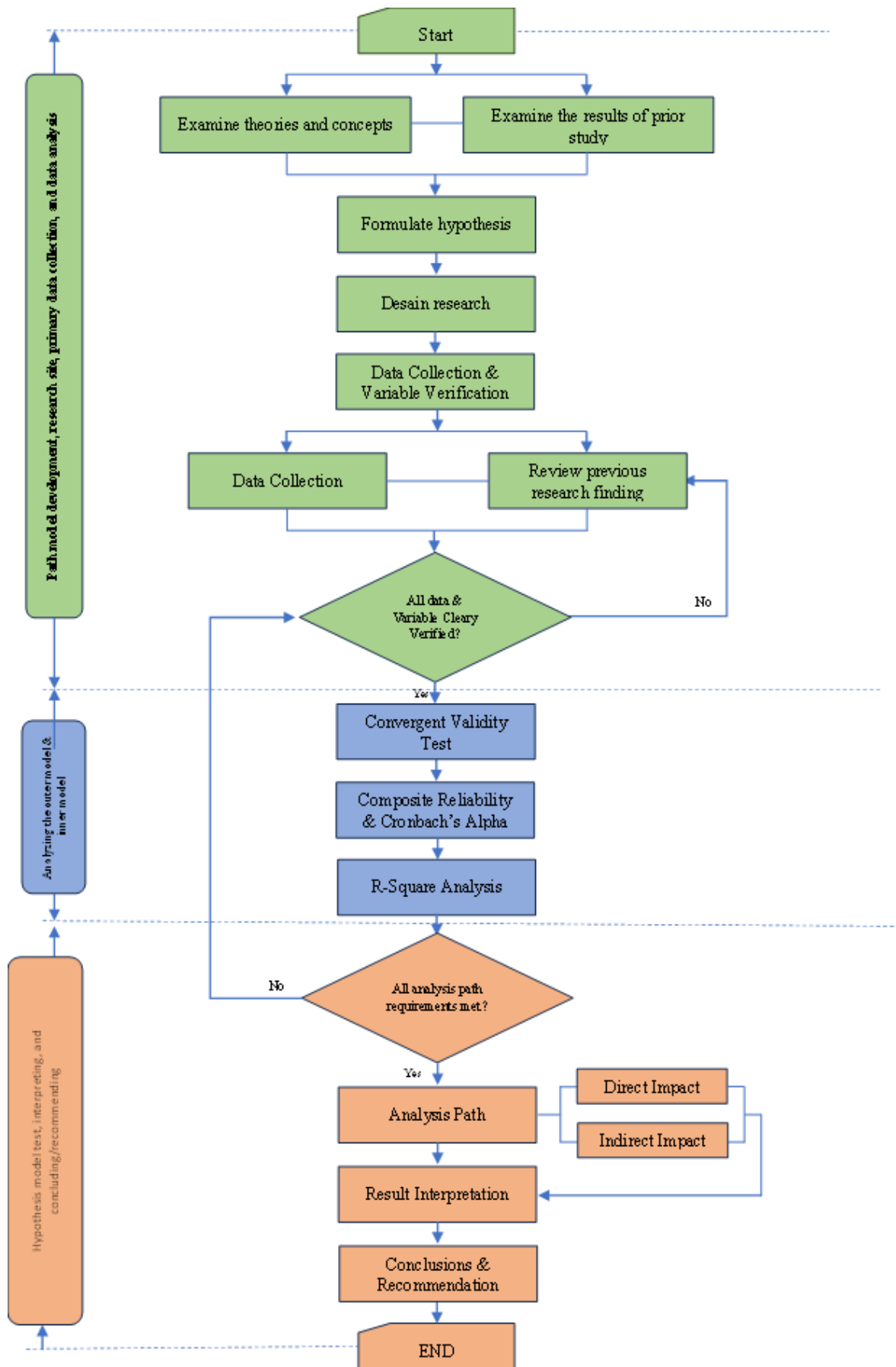


Figure 3. The Flowchart of The Study Process

Table 1. The Description of The Variables

Latent variable	Measure Variable (MV)	
	MV Name	Source
Total Quality management	Customer Focus	Ngambi & Nkemkiafe, 2015; Jimoh, et al., 2018; Sawaeen & Mohd Ali, 2020.
	Top Management	Jimoh, et al., 2018; Sawaeen & Mohd Ali, 2020.
	Process Management	Ngambi & Nkemkiafe, 2015.
	Benchmarking	Ngambi & Nkemkiafe, 2015; Jimoh, et al., 2018
	Employee Engagement & Work Environment	Ngambi & Nkemkiafe, 2015; Jimoh, et al., 2018
Organizational Culture	Individual Initiative	Tika, 2010; Robbins, 1990
	Tolerance for Risky Actions	
	Management Support	
	Direction	
Organizational Performance	Financial Performance	Wijaya, 2020; Al-Dhaafri & Alosani, 2020; Bhaskar, 2020; Abdul et al., 2019
	Operational Performance	Wijaya, 2020; Abdul et al., 2019

Results and Discussion

Characteristic Respondents

The first phase outlined in this section pertains to the attributes of the participants, including gender, age, length of service, and the employees' fields of work. The findings suggest that 90% of the participants are male, and approximately 42% are over 40 years old. The study also shows that most respondents have 11-15 years of work experience. Additionally, the results reveal that nearly 65% of the respondents work in administrative roles, which include various positions such as secretaries, administrative staff, and other related roles. 17% are in marketing, including positions like marketing management assistants and sales representatives. 12% are in management, encompassing managerial positions such as unit heads, marketing heads, and finance/general heads. Lastly, 6% are in finance, covering roles like financial treasurers, financial management assistants, material treasurers, and financial treasurers.

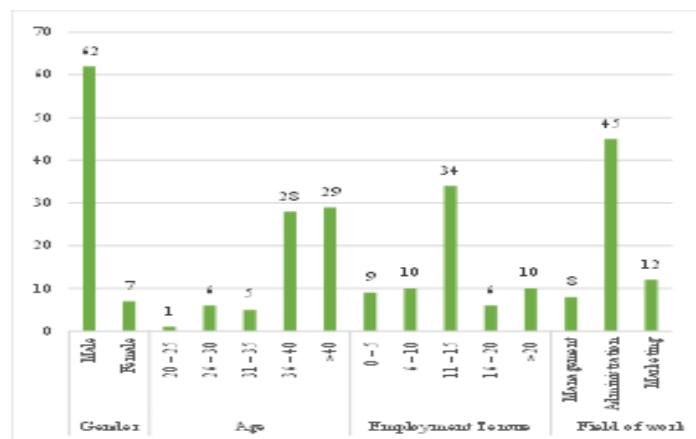


Figure 4. Characteristic Respondent

Table 2. Convergent

Variables	Items	Loading	VIF*	AVE**	Rho_a	CR***	α****	R ²
Costumer Focus	CF1	0.878	2.589	0.757	0.839	0.903	0.839	0.727
	CF2	0.867	2.801					
	CF3	0.864	2.584					
Top Management	TM1	0.894	2.515	0.795	0.742	0.886	0.742	0.714
	TM2	0.889	2.192					
Process Management	PM1	0.872	2.110	0.735	0.644	0.847	0.640	0.670
	PM2	0.843	2.076					
Benchmarking	BC1	0.882	2.081	0.767	0.697	0.868	0.696	0.532
	BC2	0.869	1.698					
Employee Engagement & Work Environment	ET1	0.819	2.358	0.754	0.837	0.902	0.835	0.725
	ET2	0.925	3.444					
	ET3	0.857	3.536					
Individual Initiative	II1	0.885	4.619	0.848	0.826	0.918	0.821	0.846
	II2	0.806	3.455					
Tolerance for Risky Actions	TR1	0.826	2.924	0.831	0.797	0.908	0.796	0.809
	TR2	0.814	3.435					
Management Support	MS1	0.809	3.010	0.827	0.791	0.905	0.791	0.795
	MS2	0.813	2.694					
Direction	DR1	0.867	3.990	0.786	0.745	0.880	0.730	0.820
	DR2	0.730	2.351					
Integration	IT1	0.780	3.254	0.874	0.858	0.933	0.856	0.733
	IT2	0.820	3.405					
Financial Performance	FP1	0.833	2.779	0.789	0.739	0.882	0.733	0.797
	FP2	0.749	2.181					
Operational Performance	OS1	0.790	2.106	0.718	0.903	0.927	0.901	0.966
	OS2	0.866	3.169					
	OS3	0.882	3.540					
	OS4	0.820	2.470					
	OS5	0.798	2.784					

(Variance Inflation Factor)*; (Average Variance Extracted)** ; (Composite Reliability)***
(Cronbach's Alpha)****

The validity and reliability results, as shown in Table 2, reveal that all constructs demonstrate good convergent validity and reliability, adhering to the recommended criteria. The acceptable factor loadings range from 0.749 to 0.925, with adequate AVE values greater than 0.50. Additionally, the values for rho_A (0.644-0.903), CR (0.847-0.933), and Cronbach's alpha (0.640-0.901) are all higher than 0.70.

Model Hypothesis Test Results

The results from the model explain the hypothesized relationships and the outer loadings of the model. The study's findings are depicted in Fig. 5.

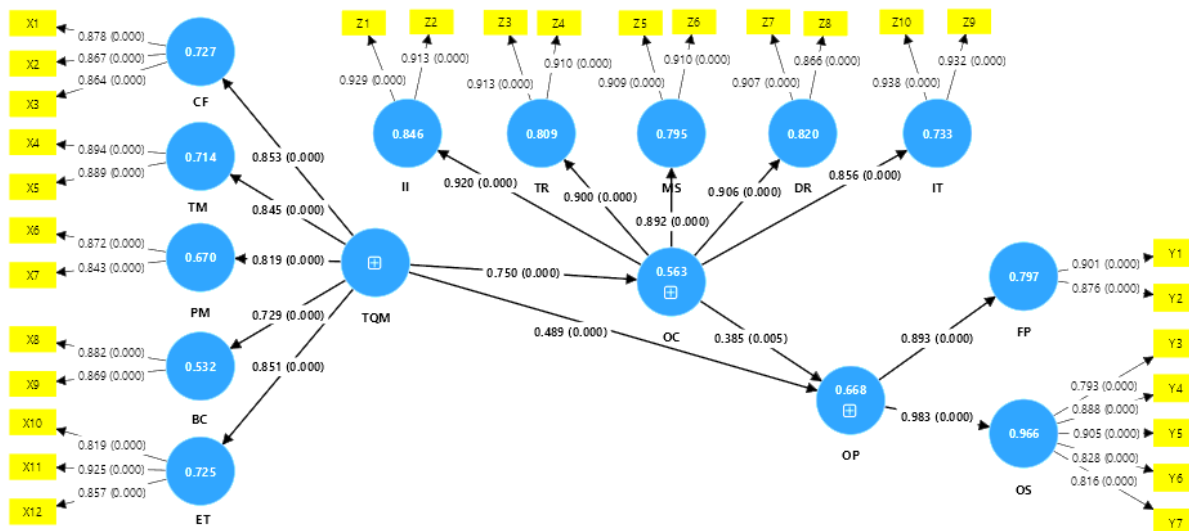


Figure 4. The Results of Testing The Hypothesis

This study utilized Smart PLS 4.0 to test the path relationships. The Bootstrapping method was employed to calculate the t-statistics and parameter significance. The R² values for OC and OP indicate that the model has a reasonably good predictive ability, with OC in the strong category (56.3%) and OP also in the strong category (66.8%) according to Chin (1998) criteria. we used the categories of strong (0.34–0.67), moderate (0.20–0.33), and feeble (0.00–0.19) in this study. The study results, along with the standardized regression weights and significance levels, are presented in Table 3 and Fig. 5.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Original Sampel (O)	Sampel Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Value
TQM → OP	0.777	0.785	0.049	16.013	0.000
TQM → OC	0.750	0.749	0.068	11.008	0.000
TQM → OC → OP	0.289	0.275	0.105	2.745	0.007

The hypothesis H1 demonstrates that TQM has a favorable and substantial impact on OP. The T-Statistic value of 16.013 significantly exceeds the crucial threshold of 1.96 (at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$), The P-value of 0.000 suggests a high level of significance for this association, providing support for H1. The findings of hypothesis H2 suggest that TQM has a favorable and statistically significant impact on OC. The association is very significant, as indicated by a T-Statistic of 11.008 and a P-Value of 0.000. The indirect relationship between SCM and OP through OC is also statistically significant, with a T-Statistic of 2.745 (> 1.96) and a P-Value of 0.002 (< 0.05). The path coefficient of 0.289 indicates that TQM influences OP indirectly through OC. Organizational culture plays a role in mediating the impact of TQM on organizational performance.

Discussion

TQM in Organizational Performance

The study findings suggest that TQM has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance. In line with (Al-Dhaafri & Alosani, 2020; Bhaskar, 2020; Sirisan & Pianthong, 2019) TQM has a stronger correlation with performance. The adoption of TQM in this organization has yielded favorable outcomes in terms of both financial and operational performance. TQM practices reduce waste and increase company productivity. Consistent implementation of TQM practices enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. This aligns with study by (Olabimtan & Olopete, 2024) who state that TQM dimensions positively impact organizational performance, including non-financial performance, market share value, and employee commitment and support. Additionally, (Ghassan et al., 2019) note that high customer satisfaction principles can reduce costs due to fewer product returns and increase revenue through customer loyalty. TQM implementation helps organizations improve their efficiency and overall performance towards achieving a world-class status.

TQM in Organizational Culture

The study results indicate that TQM has a positive and significant effect on organizational culture. Consequently, as the level of Total Quality Management (TQM) implemented in a business increase, the organizational culture becomes more advanced. The findings corroborate and substantiate the outcomes of previous studies conducted by (Alquqa et al., 2023; Golrizgashti et al., 2022; Shuaib & He, 2023b, 2023a) which reveal that TQM has a strong relationship with organizational culture. (Mohamed, 2020) adds that TQM requires cultural change and a focus on long-term quality-based strategic planning. It is noteworthy that the company studied in this study is a merged company. In TQM practice, the company supports employees in expressing their opinions and initiatives, even in situations involving risk, and fosters collaboration among employees through targeted training. This aligns with (Patyal et al., 2020) who explain that companies aiming to implement TQM must develop an organizational culture that supports group values, thereby enhancing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall productivity. (Ababneh, 2020) asserts that a favorable organizational culture and strong employee engagement are crucial elements for successfully implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) and enhancing organizational performance. TQM is realized through collaboration from various parties and continuous improvement, thereby creating a good organizational culture.

TQM in Organizational Performance through Organizational Culture

Organizational culture plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between TQM and performance (Eniola et al., 2019). Consistent with previous study, this study shows that TQM has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance through organizational culture. TQM can directly influence organizational performance and indirectly affect it through organizational culture. An organizational culture creates an environment where employees feel supported, heard, and empowered to contribute positively. This enhances employee motivation and engagement, which in turn can improve overall organizational performance.

The findings of (Abdul et al., 2019; Al-Shami & Al-Sufif, 2024) which state that TQM influences organizational performance through organizational culture. Successful TQM implementation requires the support of an appropriate organizational culture, while a strong and supportive organizational culture can help improve overall organizational performance. (Yama et al., 2019) add that a supportive organizational culture is crucial for the successful implementation of TQM as a technique for improving overall organizational performance.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of this study highlight the relationship between overall quality management, organizational culture, and organizational performance. The study's conclusions provide two significant contributions to theoretical advancement. Previous studies have demonstrated that implementing TQM significantly affects both the organizational culture and performance of a company (Ababneh, 2020). Thus, this study confirms that TQM implementation can strengthen organizational culture and improve organizational performance, particularly in the context of merged companies. The researchers argue that TQM can enhance operational efficiency and shape values and rules within the company. Second, the organizational culture has the ability to influence the connection between TQM procedures and the performance of the firm. This assertion is corroborated by a prior investigation (Eniola et al., 2019; Fok et al., 2021) which states that organizational culture is crucial in helping implement TQM to achieve optimal performance. This study aligns with the findings of (Alghamdi, 2018) which indicate that collaboration among company members in implementing TQM principles, combined with a suitable organizational culture, can enhance overall performance and the achievement of organizational goals. Therefore, the findings of this study support the existing theory that a strong organizational culture can improve organizational performance. This is consistent with previous study showing that a positive organizational culture enhances operational efficiency and overall company performance. This study makes a valuable addition to enhancing the comprehension of TQM implementation and advancing theories and models of efficient total quality management procedures within the framework of organizational culture.

Conclusion

This investigation underscores the complex interplay between organizational performance, organizational culture, and Total Quality Management (TQM). The results indicate that Total Quality Management (TQM) has a significant and positive effect on a company's performance, both directly and indirectly, through the influence of organizational culture. Organizational culture has a substantial impact on the relationship between Total Quality Management (TQM) and organizational performance. Employee initiative and collaboration strengthen the relationships within the organization and create greater synergy. A culture that encourages active participation, inclusive decision-making, and consistent management support fosters a productive and efficient work environment. In the context of a merged company, the execution of Total Quality Management (TQM) places significant emphasis on the crucial task of satisfying and surpassing customer expectations. This practice drives the organization to continually improve product quality and services. Focusing on the customer helps shape an organizational

culture that is more responsive and proactive in meeting market needs. This creates an environment oriented toward quality and continuous improvement. This, in turn, will enhance customer loyalty, leading to a subsequent enhancement in the company's financial performance and reputation. The findings of this study are anticipated to function as a mechanism for identifying and resolving managerial deficiencies in combined state-owned companies (SOE) in Indonesia, with the aim of improving their performance. The company should focus on strengthening its organizational culture and investing in employee development to enhance their potential and skills. These companies should focus on strengthening organizational culture and investing in employee development to enhance their potential and skills. The investigation could be furthered by investigating supplementary variables that may affect the correlation between organizational performance, organizational culture, and Total Quality Management (TQM). In addition, longitudinal studies are advised to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of Total Quality Management (TQM) implementation and its influence on the organizational culture of merging organizations.

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